

THE LAND OF
POETRY

TRANSITION

WENTWORTH HILL
AND
H. G. WOOD

THE LAND OF POETRY

*A Series of complete
Anthologies of English
Verse for young readers*

TRANSITION

*And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!*

R. L. S.

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Wentworth Hill, M.A.

&

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PREFACE

IN each book of this series of anthologies for young readers, *The Land of Poetry*, we have sought to present a collection of poems which shall be as appropriate as possible to the age and capacity of the child for whom it is intended. The poems have been most carefully selected and arranged, not only to give and maintain freshness of appeal, thus arousing interest, but also to prove an abiding satisfaction by providing for all the reader's varied interests and yearnings.

There are rhymes and jingles which haunt the memory even to middle-age and later; quaint and fantastic poems which set the imagination roaming; sweet and playful poems of fairies; tender lullabies; verses full of innocent fun and nonsense; poems which reveal the beauties of nature, and others which stress the high and noble in us. Necessarily, many of them are of the past—poems which the verdict of successive generations has pronounced great—but the very large number of copyright poems is evidence of the resolve to make the selection the best possible, both in quality and appeal. The greatest care has also been taken to ensure that each book is as attractive to the child and as charming a unity as possible.

Children greatly enjoy hearing, reading, and repeating attractive verses. In this capacity for pleasure lie boundless possibilities of developing in them a love for the good, the beautiful, and the true. They intuitively realize that the appeal of poetry is to the ear rather than to the eye—that poetry has a voice. Herein lies its great educational value, for the Voice of Poetry expresses the beauty and joy, the mystery and solemnity of our life, both individual and national, in the highest and most personal terms.

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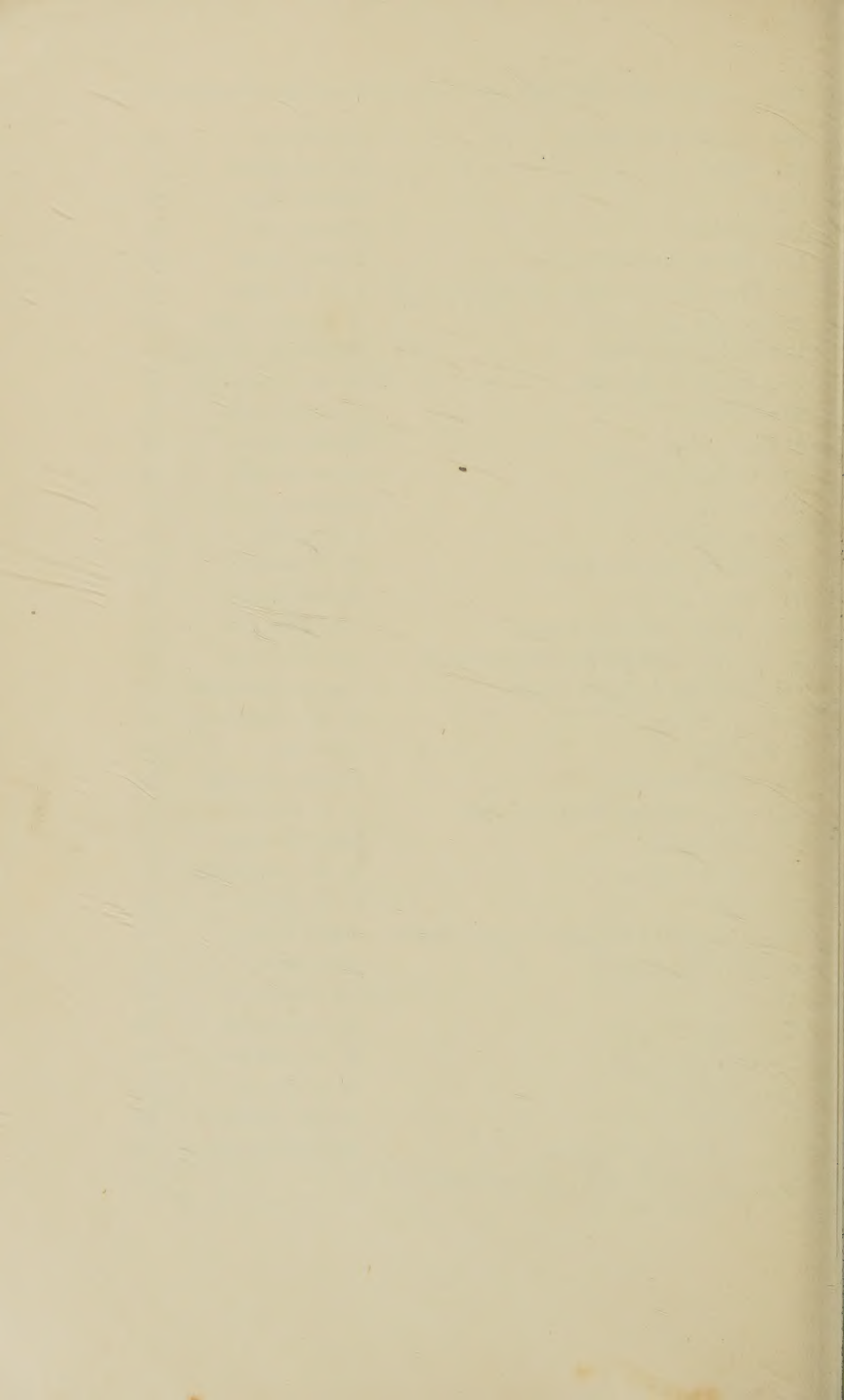
H. G. W.

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THE BALLAD OF SEMMERWATER

Sir William Watson

Sir William Watson, himself a north-countryman, narrates here a legend of the type that was common in past centuries. The countryside (especially the north and west), had many a castle, lake, or hill concerning which grim stories were told. The style of the poem suits its subject, resembling closely the medieval ballad. Note the repetition of words or phrases, and the direct, almost terrible, simplicity with which the tale is told.

NORTH COUNTRY LEGEND

DEEP asleep, deep asleep,
Deep asleep it lies,
The still lake of Semmerwater
Under the still skies.

And many a fathom, many a fathom,
Many a fathom below,
In a king's tower and a queen's bower
The fishes come and go.

Once there stood by Semmerwater
 A mickle town and tall;
 King's tower and queen's bower
 And the wakeman on the wall.

Came a beggar halt and sore:
 "I faint for lack of bread."
 King's tower and queen's bower
 Cast him forth unfed.

He knocked at the door of the herdman's cot,
 The herdman's cot in the dale.
 They gave him of their oatcake,
 They gave him of their ale.

He had cursed aloud that city proud,
 He had cursed it in its pride;
 He had cursed it into Semmerwater
 Down the brant hillside;
 He had cursed it into Semmerwater,
 There to bide.

King's tower and queen's bower,
 And a mickle town and tall;
 By glimmer of scale and gleam of fin,
 Folk have seen them all.
 King's tower and queen's bower,
 And weed and reed in the gloom;
 And a lost city in Semmerwater,
 Deep asleep till Doom.

A WALKING SONG

Charles Williams

This poem is beautiful both in its thought and in its sweet, melodious metre. We must be careful in reading it to make the accents fall correctly. It brings to our mind not only present-day wonders (such as the great Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York Harbour), but strange and wonderful things of the distant past (such as the ages of Troy, Phoenicia, and Rome). Who is the "noble lady" referred to in the last verse? How can it be possible, in a walk through London, to visit Troy and Rome and Tibet and the jungle?

HERE we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Down the world, round the world, back to London
 town,
 To see the waters and the whales, the emus and the
 mandarins,
 To see the Chinese mandarins, each in a silken
 gown.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Through the vast Atlantic waves, back to London
 town,
 To see the ships made whole again that sank below
 the tempest,
 The Trojan and Phoenician ships that long ago went
 down.

And there are sailors keeping watch on many a Roman
 galley,
 And silver bars and golden bars and mighty treasure
 hid,
 And splendid Spanish gentlemen majestically walking
 And waiting on their Admiral as once in far Madrid.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Out by holy Glastonbury, back to London town,
 Before a cup, a shining cup, a cup of beating crimson,
 To see Saint Joseph saying Mass all with a shaven
 crown.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Down and under to New York, back to London
 town,
 To see the face of Liberty that smiles upon all children,
 But when too soon they come of age she answers
 with a frown.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 O'er the wide Tibetan plains, back to London
 town,
 To see the youthful Emperor among his seventy
 princes,
 Who bears the mystic sceptre, who wears the mystic
 crown.

The tongue he speaks is older far than Hebrew or than
 Latin,
 And ancient rituals drawn therein his eyes of mercy
 con;
 About his throne the candles shine and thuribles of
 incense
 Are swung about his footstool, and his name is
 Prester John.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Through the jungles African, back to London
 town,
 To see the shining rivers and the drinking-place by
 moonlight,
 And the lions and hyenas and the zebras coming
 down:

To see bright birds and butterflies, the monstrous
 hippopotami,
 The silent secret crocodiles that keep their ancient
 guile,
 The white road of the caravans that stretches o'er
 Sahara,
 And the Pharaoh in his litter at the fording of the
 Nile.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Up the holy streets of Rome, back to London town,
 To see the marching legions and the Consuls in their
 triumph,
 And the moving lips of Virgil and the laurel of his
 crown;

And there is Cæsar pacing to the foot of Pompey's
 statue,
 All scornful of his mastery, all careless of alarms;
 And there the Pope goes all in white among his scarlet
 Cardinals
 And carried on the shoulders of his gentlemen-at-
 arms.

Here we go a-walking, so softly, so softly,
 Up the hills of Hampstead, back to London town,
 And the garden gate stands open and the house door
 swings before us,
 And the candles twinkle happily as we lie down.

For here the noble lady is who meets us from our
 wanderings,
 Here are all the sensible and very needful things,
 Here are blankets, here is milk, here are rest and
 slumber,
 And the courteous prince of angels with the fire
 about his wings.

✓ DRAKE'S DRUM

Sir Henry Newbolt

Sir Francis Drake died at sea, and his body was buried in the deep. His drum is still carefully preserved at a manor-house in Devon, and an old legend says that when danger threatens England, the drum is heard to sound. Sir Henry Newbolt has taken this idea as the subject of this stirring poem. Like all Newbolt's work, it is full of vigour and life, and a firm, confident spirit. The dialect of the first two verses is that of Devon, the speech of Drake himself.

DRAKE he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile
away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot in Nombro Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor-lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide
dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed
them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
 Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
 Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
 They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found
 him long ago!

THE MAID AND THE MILLER

This is one of the gay old folk-rhymes of which our literature has so many. It is quite usual for them to have a fourth and sometimes a second line in the nature of a refrain. These lines may be meaningless, but they give to the poem a general air of jollity; and when such poems were sung, the easy refrains gave the listeners a welcome chance of joining in.

THERE was a maid went to the mill:
Sing trolly, lolly, lolly lolly lo!
 The mill went round but the maid stood still.
O ho ho and did she so?

The miller kissed her, away she went:
Sing trolly, lolly, lolly lolly lo!
 The maid was well pleased and the miller content.
O ho ho and was she so?

He danced and he sang while the mill went clack:
Sing trolly, lolly, lolly lolly lo!
 And he cherished his heart with a cup of old sack.
O ho ho and did he so?

A GROUP OF POEMS ON DAFFODILS

Here are poems about daffodils—all charming, and all different. Wordsworth had seen a vast stretch of daffodils bordering a lake—and the sight so thrilled him that the memory of it never left him. This is not to be wondered at, as you will realize if ever you see a great mass of one kind of flower—for instance, a railway-cutting whose banks are covered with primroses, a wood where the ground is one stretch of bluebells, or a field red with poppies—"a field of blood."

To Robert Herrick, who lived long before Wordsworth, the sight of a number of daffodils suggested other thoughts—it reminded him of the short life both of flowers and of man.

But to H. M. Burton far different thoughts come. The wondrous beauty and the glory of the flowers—how were these things possible? Only by the gift of fairies and by magic; and if the golden flowers die, yet they have been so royal in their beauty that even their death is not terrible.

THE DAFFODILS

William Wordsworth

I WANDERED lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company;
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude,
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the Daffodils.

TO DAFFODILS

Robert Herrick

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
 As yet the early-rising Sun
 Has not attain'd his noon.
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the even-song;
 And, having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you;
 We have as short a Spring;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything.

We die
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away,
 Like to the Summer's rain;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.

TO A DAFFODIL

H. M. Burton

WISE men came when you were born,
 Knelt around you that bright morn;
 One brought grace and comely form;
 One your colour, golden-warm;
 One, the ever-freshening scent
 Breathing out your sweet content.

Round your cradle fairies danced,
 Witches crooned and goblins pranced;
 King Sun was your Royal brother,
 Mystic Moon your midnight mother;
 When she slumbered, stars above
 Laughed their silent, sister-love.

Now you're dying, daffodil;
 Yet your gold is shining still;
 Sadly, now your story's said,
 Droops your wistful golden head;
 But your sweetly fading breath
 Dying, makes a mock of Death.

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

H. W. Longfellow

In 1584 Sir Humphrey Gilbert, half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, took a leading part in an expedition to Newfoundland, where the English flag was hoisted. This is often regarded as the real beginning of the British Empire. He started his homeward voyage in the *Squirrel*, which was quite a small vessel. A great storm arose. By the light of the lightning flashes those on board other ships saw Sir Humphrey sitting quietly on deck, and heard his cheery call: "We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land." During the night the *Squirrel* sank, and all on board perished.

In this fine poem Longfellow pictures Death as a grim pirate setting out from the North to destroy all in his path. Grappling Sir Humphrey's ship, Death bears it captive away; yet we may be sure Death had no terrors for Sir Humphrey.

SOUTHWARD with fleet of ice
 Sailed the corsair Death;
 Wild and fast blew the blast,
 And the east wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice
 Glisten in the sun;
 On each side, like pennons wide,
 Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
 Dripped with silver rain;
 But where he passed there were cast
 Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
 Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
 Three days or more seaward he bore,
 Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

Alas! the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night;
And never more, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand;
"Do not fear! Heaven is near,"
He said, "by water as by land!"

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold!
As of a rock was the shock;
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark,
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain o'er the open main;
Yet there seems no change of place

Southward, for ever southward,
They drift through dark and day;
And like a dream in the Gulf-stream
Sinking, vanish all away.

THE BIGGER-WIGGERS

Percy Flott

This is nonsense, you will say. Yes, it is; and very amusing nonsense, too. It is good to laugh at times; and some of our great writers have found pleasure themselves and given endless pleasure to others by writing nonsense. Think, for instance, of other nonsense verses you have read, and of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Two Bigger-Wiggers lived
 Upon a mountain-top,
 They ran about all day
 Because they could not stop.
 Hair grew upon their heads,
 They had not any clothes,
 Feet grew upon their legs,
 They had not any toes.
 In spite of these advantages
 Their misery was great,
 For though they ran about all day
 And sometimes stayed out late,
 Looking in every rocky cave
 And ev'ry likely spot,
 No Quagger-Wagger could they find
 To come and share their lot.
 They found a kat high up a tree
 Who spat and swore a bit;
 They found a whity woolly chog
 Who fiercely growled and bit;
 They found a tuttle 'neath a stone
 Who said, "Just mind my eggs.
 If you're not very careful, friends,
 I'll break your thin old legs."
 They hurriedly departed then,
 And sadly went to bed,
 Beneath a new spring eiderdown
 Painted a greenish red.

One said, "To-morrow," as he lay
 Upon the mountain bleak,
 "We'll really find a Quagger-Wag,"
 The other did not speak.

The sun arose next morning
 Behind the mountain-top,
 And saw the Bigger-Wiggers eat
 A beautiful chork pop.
 They ate it for their breakfast,
 'Twas juicy and so tender,
 And 'cause the morning air was cold
 They sat upon the fender.
 They cleared away by washing up
 The remnant of the bone,
 They hid the fender, knives, and forks,
 Beneath a crookèd stone.
 They sat and contemplated,
 The while each smoked a pipe,
 And one said, "Friend, I really think
 The time is now quite ripe."
 The other nodded gravely,
 Continuing to smoke,
 "I quite agree with what you said,
 But not with what you spoke."
 The Bigger-Wigger rose at that,
 He rose to his full height.
 The other laughed, "I'm 'Bigger' too
 So me you'll not affright."
 Both said, "We will not quarrel,
 We'll try another way;
 You shall search throughout the night
 And I throughout the day."
 "Through all the mountain pines I'll search
 And you'll not bear me malice
 If I do find my Quagger Bride,
 Nor if I call her Alice."

"The mountain-top," the other said,
 "I'll leave and choose the valley,
 And if I find my Quagger wife—
 Well, I shall call her Sally."

Days and nights have passed away
 As days and nights will do,
 Birthdays, Christmas Days as well,
 Though no one knows where to.
 Until one day the sun arose
 And said, "A year to-day
 The Bigger-Wiggers said 'Good-bye'
 And each went on his way.
 And here they are now coming back
 To meet at the crookéd stone,
 How very, very sad they look,
 And each is quite alone."
 Slowly each Bigger-Wigger runs
 Until they see each other,
 And then they hasten to embrace
 And murmur, "O, my brother,
 I never found a Quagger-Wag,
 I searched the pine wood through.
 No Quaggers in the valley live,
 I looked as hard as you.
 And then I grew so lonely,
 The outlook seemed so black,
 I ran as hard as I could run
 And ran the whole way back."
 Beneath the old and crookéd stone,
 They found their forks and knives,
 And each said to the other one,
 "We don't want any wives."
 And as they gaily breakfasted
 On shosages and tam,
 Saying, "Thank you" to each other
 When the other passed the pam,

They decided that they'd never try
 Again a wife to find,
 They'd rather tame a lot of pets
 By being *very* kind.

So now if you should ever pass
 Upon that mountain way,
 You'll find the Bigger-Wiggers are
 Quite happy and quite gay.
 The tuttle came to live with them,
 The whity woolly chog,
 And the cussie kat, who asked if she
 Might bring her friend the flog.
 A happy little party, they
 Sit quiet while each one sings,
 And when they're not at breakfast, they
 Are washing up the things.

[NOTE.—This last line sounds almost as bad as if they had married, but it cannot be helped.—*Uncle Toby*.]

YOUTH AND AGE

Charles Kingsley

Charles Kingsley is famous for his stirring novels, the best known being *Westward Ho!* Scattered through his books are a number of charming little poems—some brisk and joyous, some pathetic. This pretty and wise little song is from *The Water-Babies*, a delightful tale which he wrote for children.

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
 And all the trees are green;
 And every goose a swan, lad,
 And every lass a queen;

Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
 And round the world away;
 Young blood must have its course, lad,
 And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
 And all the trees are brown;
 And all the sport is stale, lad,
 And all the wheels run down;
 Creep home, and take your place there,
 The spent and maimed among:
 God grant you find one face there,
 You loved when all was young.

THE SHIPS OF YULE

Bliss Carman

Here is another charming poem, reminding us somewhat of Charles Williams' *A Child's Walking Song*, for this also tells of wonderful journeys taken in fancy. In the *Walking Song* we went to the jungle and China, to Tibet and New York; here we go to the great lands of the past, Babylon and Tyre, Samarcand and India. To enjoy this poem to the full we should know something about the places mentioned. We should remember, too, that England's great explorers, like this little boy, dreamed dreams of far-off lands and could not rest till they had set out to find them.

WHEN I was just a little boy,
 Before I went to school,
 I had a fleet of forty sail
 I called the Ships of Yule;

Of every rig, from rakish brig
 And gallant barkentine
 To little Fundy fishing-boats
 With gunwales painted green.

They used to go on trading trips
Around the world for me,
For though I had to stay at home
My heart was on the sea.

They stopped at every port of call
From Babylon to Rome,
To load with all the lovely things
We never had at home;

With elephants and ivory
Bought from the King of Tyre,
And shells and silk and sandal-wood
That sailor-men admire;

With figs and dates from Samarcand,
And squatty ginger-jars,
And scented silver amulets,
From Indian bazaars;

With sugar-cane from Port of Spain,
And monkeys from Ceylon,
And paper lanterns from Pekin
With painted dragons on;

With coconuts from Zanzibar,
And pines from Singapore;
And when they had unloaded these
They could go back for more.

And even after I was big
And had to go to school,
My mind was often far away
Aboard the Ships of Yule.

MERCHANTMEN

Cicely Fox-Smith

Miss Cicely Fox-Smith is a great lover of ships and the sea. She has written many fine sea-poems, some grave, some gay, but all full of endless joy in the sea, its ships, and its men. In these verses, written shortly after the Great War, she reminds us of the great debt England owes to the sailors who man the ordinary cargo-boats. It is interesting to compare this poem with Kipling's *Big Steamers*. *Britain*

ALL honour be to merchantmen,
 And ships of all degree,
 In warlike dangers manifold
 Who sail and keep the sea,—
 In peril of unlitten coast
 And death-besprinkled foam,
 Who daily dare a hundred deaths
 To bring their cargoes home.

A liner out of Liverpool—a tanker from the Clyde—
 A hard-run tramp from anywhere—a tug from
 Merseyside—
 A cattle-boat from Birkenhead—a coaler from the
 Tyne—
 All honour be to merchantmen while any star shall
 shine!

All honour be to merchantmen,
 And ships both great and small,
 The swift and strong to run their race
 (And smite their foes withal),
 The little ships that sink or swim,
 And pay the pirates' toll,
 Unarmoured save by valiant hearts,
 And strong in nought but soul.

All honour be to merchantmen
 So long as tides shall run,
 Who gave the seas their glorious dead
 From rise to set of sun:

All honour be to merchantmen
 While England's name shall stand,
 Who sailed and fought, and dared and died,
 And served and saved their land!

A sailing ship from Liverpool—a tanker from the
 Clyde—

A schooner from the West Countrie—a tug from
 Merseyside—

A fishing-smack from Grimsby town—a coaler from
 the Tyne—

All honour be to merchantmen while sun and moon
 shall shine.

THE VULTURE

Hilaire Belloc

This very amusing verse is from a series called *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*.

THE Vulture eats between his meals,
 And that's the reason why
 He very, very rarely feels
 As well as you or I.
 His eye is dull, his head is bald,
 His neck is growing thinner.
 Oh, what a lesson for us all
 To only eat at dinner!

SUMMER

Christina Rossetti

Poets have sung of every season. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter—all have found singers to praise them. Here Christina Rossetti extols Summer whole-heartedly. So vigorous, indeed, is she that she attacks the other seasons. Of course, Spring is yea and nay. But so is Summer. However, one must not examine every statement of a poet too closely. This is a fine vigorous poem. Notice that it is not all written in the same metre. Some of the lines are longer than others; but this is quite pleasing, if read carefully according to the rhythm. Some of the descriptions are very good; e.g. the *anchored lilies*, the *pendulum spider*, *lag-last* days.

WINTER is cold-hearted,
 Spring is yea and nay,
 Autumn is a weather-cock
 Blown every way:
 Summer days for me
 When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,
 And Jenny Wren's a bride,
 And larks hang singing, singing, singing,
 Over the wheat-fields wide,
 And anchored lilies ride,
 And the pendulum spider
 Swings from side to side.

And blue-black beetles transact business,
 And gnats fly in a host,
 And furry caterpillars hasten
 That no time be lost,
 And moths grow fat and thrive,
 And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,
 Before green nuts embrown,
 Why, one day in the country
 Is worth a month in town;
 Is worth a day and a year
 Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
 That days drone elsewhere.

TO-DAY

Thomas Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle, the great historian and philosopher, did not often write poetry. What he did write, however, is all marked by the deep, earnest spirit of devotion to duty that formed his great message to mankind. "Do the duty that lies nearest thee," he said. When urged to rest, he replied, "Why should I rest? Have I not all Eternity to rest in?"

So here hath been dawning
 Another blue day;
 Think, wilt thou, let it
 Slip useless away?

Out of Eternity
 This new day is born;
 Into Eternity
 At night will return.

Behold it aforetime
 No eye ever did;
 So soon it forever
 From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
 Another blue day;
 Think, wilt thou let it
 Slip useless away?

✓ MEG MERRILIES

John Keats

John Keats was a great poet who died while he was still a young man. Most of his poetry is too difficult for boys and girls. But *Meg Merrilies* is a great favourite. His picture of the lonely but kind-hearted old gipsy woman is so vivid that we should feel no surprise if we actually met her. Keats excelled in the art of word-painting. And his choice of words is always very beautiful.

OLD Meg she was a gipsy,
 And lived upon the moors;
 Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
 And her house was out of doors.
 Her apples were swart blackberries,
 Her currants pods o' broom;
 Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
 Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
 Her sisters larchen trees;
 Alone with her great family
 She lived as she did please.
 No breakfast had she many a morn,
 No dinner many a noon,
 And 'stead of supper she would stare
 Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
 She made her garlanding,
 And every night the dark glen yew
 She wore; and she would sing,
 And with her fingers old and brown
 She plaited mats of rushes,
 And gave them to the cottagers
 She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,
 And tall as Amazon;
 An old red blanket cloak she wore,
 A ship-hat had she on;
 God rest her aged bones somewhere!
 She died full long ago!

LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF

Sir Walter Scott

Sir Walter Scott was a great novelist and the author of several long poems. His shorter poems are full of life and vigour, and often deal with the chase or with war. You will notice that although this is a cradle-song, the note of war runs through it. The nurse cannot forget that the time will come when the baby she rocks will be a warrior leading his men against a hostile force. There is a fine rhythm in these verses.

O HUSH thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
 Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
 The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
 They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.

O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
 It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
 Their bows would be bended, their blades would be
 red,
 Ere the step of a foeman drew near to thy bed.

O, hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come
 When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
 Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
 For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

THISTLEDOWN

R. C. K. Ensor

There was a time when poets heeded not the beauties of Nature, or perhaps thought that such things as flowers were beneath their notice. It was not so with our greatest writers. Shakespeare and Milton, though chiefly concerned with men, often refer to flowers and other natural objects in a way that shows they loved them. Wordsworth and Burns helped to bring back a true sense of the glory of Nature; and modern poets consider even the "humblest flower that blows" worthy of serious observation and admiration. In this poem, light and airy as its subject, we find the poet dwelling on the fragile, insignificant thistledown that drifts across each field in autumn.

DRIFTING by
Across the sky
Whence?—whither?—why?
Perhaps to pillow a queen's rest,
Perhaps to soften a bird's nest,
Perhaps to rot:
Helpless things,
I know not.

Yet they have wings.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Robert Browning

This amusing poem, with its serious lesson that we should always keep our promises, was written by Robert Browning to interest the little son of a friend, Mr. Macready. The boy is the "Willy" to whom the last verse is addressed.

The poem is remarkable not only for the lifelike picture of people and scenes, but also for the clever and unusual rhymes.

HAMELIN TOWN's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The River Weser deep and wide
Washes its walls on the southern side;

A pleasanter spot you never spied;
 But, when begins my ditty,
 Almost five hundred years ago,
 To see the townsfolk suffer so
 From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!
 They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
 And bit the babies in the cradles,
 And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
 And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,
 Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
 Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
 And even spoiled the women's chats,
 By drowning their speaking
 With shrieking and squeaking
 In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
 To the Town Hall came flocking:
 " 'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy:
 And as for our Corporation—shocking
 To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
 For dolts that can't or won't determine
 What's best to rid us of our vermin!
 You hope, because you're old and obese,
 To find in the furry civic robe ease!
 Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
 To find the remedy we're lacking,
 Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
 At this the Mayor and Corporation
 Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council,
 At length the Mayor broke silence:
 "For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
 I wish I were a mile hence!
 It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—

I'm sure my poor head aches again,
 I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
 O for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
 Just as he said this, what should hap
 At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
 "Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
 (With the Corporation as he sat,
 Looking little though wondrous fat;
 Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
 Than a too long opened oyster,
 Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
 For a plate of turtle green and glutinous.)
 "Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
 Anything like the sound of a rat
 Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

"Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
 And in did come the strangest figure!
 His queer long coat from heel to head
 Was half of yellow and half of red;
 And he himself was tall and thin,
 With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
 And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
 No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
 But lips where smiles went out and in—
 There was no guessing his kith and kin!
 And nobody could enough admire
 The tall man and his quaint attire:
 Quoth one, "It's as my great grandsire,
 Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
 Had walked his way from his painted tombstone!"

He advanced to the council-table:
 And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able,
 By means of a secret charm, to draw
 All creatures living beneath the sun,
 That creep, or swim, or fly, or run.
 After me so as you never saw!

And I chiefly use my charm
 On creatures that do people harm,
 The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper;
 And people call me the Pied Piper."
 (And here they noticed round his neck
 A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
 To match with his coat of the selfsame check;
 And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
 And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
 As if impatient to be playing
 Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
 Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
 "Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
 In Tartary I freed the Cham,
 Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
 I eased in Asia the Nizam
 Of a monstrous brood of vampire bats;
 And, as for what your brain bewilders,
 If I can rid your town of rats
 Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
 "One? fifty thousand!" was the exclamation
 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
 Smiling first a little smile,
 As if he knew what magic slept
 In his quiet pipe the while;
 Then, like a musical adept,
 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
 Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
 You heard as if an army muttered;
 And the muttering grew to a grumbling,
 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling:
 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,

Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens,
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
 Followed the Piper for their lives.
 From street to street he piped advancing,
 And step for step they followed dancing,
 Until they came to the River Weser,
 Wherein all plunged and perished,
 Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
 Swam across, and lived to carry
 (As *he* the manuscript he cherished)
 To Rat-land home his commentary,
 Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
 And putting apples wondrous ripe
 Into a cider press's gripe;
 And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
 And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
 And it seemed as if a voice
 (Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
 Is breathed) called out, O rats, rejoice!
 The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
 So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
 Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon!
 And just as a bulky sugar puncheon,
 All ready staved, like a great sun shone
 Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
 Just as methought it said, "Come bore me!
 —I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
 Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
 "Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
 Poke out the nests and block up the holes!

Consult with carpenters and builders,
 And leave in our town not even a trace
 Of the rats!" When suddenly up the face
 Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
 With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue,
 So did the Corporation too.
 For council dinners made rare havoc
 With Claret, Moselle, Vin de Grave, Hock;
 And half the money would replenish
 Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
 With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
 "Besides," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
 "Our business was done at the river's brink;
 We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
 And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
 So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
 From the duty of giving you something for drink,
 And a matter of money to put in your poke,
 But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
 Of them, as you very well know, was in joke—
 Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;
 A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"
 The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
 "No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
 I've promised to visit by dinner-time
 Bagdad, and accept the prime
 Of the head cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
 For having left in the caliph's kitchen,
 Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
 With him I proved no bargain driver,
 With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
 And folks who put me in a passion
 May find me pipe to another fashion."

“How?” cried the Mayor, “d’ye think I’ll brook
 Being worse treated than a cook?
 Insulted by a lazy ribald
 With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
 You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
 Blow your pipe there till you burst!”

Once more he stept into the street,
 And to his lips again
 Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
 And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
 Soft notes as yet musician’s cunning
 Never gave the enraptured air)
 There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
 Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
 Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
 Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
 And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scat-
 tering
 Out came the children running,
 All the little boys and girls,
 With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
 And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
 Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
 The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
 As if they were changed into blocks of wood.
 Unable to move a step, or cry
 To the children merrily skipping by—
 And could only follow with the eye
 That joyous crowd at the Piper’s back.
 But now the Mayor was on the rack,
 And the wretched Council’s bosoms beat,
 As the Piper turned from the High Street
 To where the Weser rolled its waters
 Right in the way of their sons and daughters!

However, he turned from south to west,
And to Coppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
“He never can cross that mighty top;
He’s forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!”
When, lo! as they reached the mountain’s side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
“It’s dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can’t forget that I’m bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me:
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed, and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles’ wings,
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped, and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!”

Alas, alas, for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says, that Heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent east, west, north and south
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,

Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.

But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear.

"And so long after what happened here

On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six!"

And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where anyone playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern

To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern

They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people, that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,

To their fathers and mothers having risen
 Out of some subterraneous prison
 Into which they were trepanned
 Long ago in a mighty band,
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
 But how or why, they don't understand.

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
 Of scores out with all men,—especially pipers:
 And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from
 mice,
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our
 promise.

THE MINSTREL BOY

Thomas Moore

Ballads and songs have ever been dear to the Celtic race, and the "bard" has always been a person of honour among them. Among those who have written songs of Ireland the best known is Tom Moore. His songs were wonderfully popular in his own day, and many of them (such as *The Minstrel Boy*, *The Harp that once through Tara's Halls*, and *Oft in the Stilly Night*) retain their charm to-day. Note in this poem the passionate love of liberty that breathes through it.

THE Minstrel Boy to the war is gone,
 In the ranks of death you'll find him;
 His father's sword he has girded on,
 And his wild harp slung behind him.—
 "Land of song!" said the warrior bard,
 "Though all the world betrays thee,
 One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
 One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

The Minstrel fell,—but the foeman's chain
 Could not bring his proud soul under;
 The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
 For he tore its chords asunder;
 And said, "No chains shall sully thee,
 Thou soul of love and bravery!
 Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
 They ne'er shall sound in slavery!"

HOMeward BOUND

William Allingham

This little poem is full of quick, eager movement. In it we have all the sailor's joy in the journey home to England—to him the ship, the wind and the waves are all joyous.

HEAD the ship for England!
 Shake out every sail!
 Blithe leap the billows,
 Merry sings the gale.
 Captain, work the reckoning;
 How many knots a day?
 Round the world and home again,
 That's the sailor's way!

We've traded with the Yankees,
 Brazilians and Chinese;
 We've laughed with dusky beauties
 In shade of tall palm-trees;
 Across the line and Gulf Stream,
 Round by Table Bay—
 Everywhere and home again,
 That's the sailor's way!

THE LAND OF MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

Robert Burns

Robert Burns was Scotland's great peasant-poet. Wordsworth speaks of him as one who

. . . "walked in glory and in joy,
Following his plough upon the mountain-side."

Burns had a passionate love for Scotland and a wonderful power of writing vigorous songs. In many of them, in spite of their power, there is a touch of sadness. But "songs of farewell" are always sad. It is interesting to compare this poem with Stevenson's *Blows the Wind To-day*, Campbell's *The Exile of Erin*, and Gordon Bottomley's *Cartmel Bells*.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go!

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go!

THE BROOK

Lord Tennyson

It is impossible to read this poem without feeling how skilfully the poet has chosen his words to suggest the sounds of the rippling brook. The thought that the operations of Nature go on and on for ever, while men, with their joys and cares, their hopes and fears, pass away, is a very old one. Many poets have dwelt on it. Matthew Arnold, in one of his poems, makes Nature say:—

“Race after race, man after man,
Have dream’d that my secret was theirs.
Have thought that I lived but for them,
That they were my glory and joy—
They are dust, they are chang’d, they are gone—
I remain.”

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip’s farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret,
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel.

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
 I slide by hazel covers;
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows;
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses;
 I linger by my shingly bars;
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

✓ NICHOLAS NYE

Walter de la Mare

This delightful poem is full of the quaint fancies and the sweet, kindly delight in simple and even despised things that is so often found in the fine verses of Walter de la Mare. It is a pleasant picture, that of the boy and his friend the donkey. Did the donkey really smile, I wonder? At any rate, the boy had no doubt of it. But perhaps the one who tells the story was a girl? Yes, quite likely. But whether boy or girl, the donkey's friend had learned the great lesson that love and companionship may be found in the presence of any of our animals or birds.

THISTLE and darnel and dock grew there,
 And a bush, in the corner, of may,
 On the orchard wall I used to sprawl
 In the blazing heat of the day;
 Half asleep and half awake,
 While the birds went twittering by,
 And nobody there my lone to share
 But Nicholas Nye.

Nicholas Nye was lean and gray,
 Lame of a leg and old,
 More than a score of donkey's years
 He had seen since he was foaled;
 He munched the thistles, purple and spiked,
 Would sometimes stoop and sigh,
 And turn to his head, as if he said,
 "Poor Nicholas Nye!"

Alone with his shadow he'd drowse in the meadow,
 Lazily swinging his tail,
 At break of day he used to bray—
 Not much too hearty and hale;
 But a wonderful gumption was under his skin,
 And a clear calm light in his eye,
 And once in a while, he'd smile—
 Would Nicholas Nye.

Seem to be smiling at me, he would,
 From his bush in the corner, of may,—
 Bony and ownerless, widowed and worn
 Knobble-kneed, lonely and gray;
 And over the grass would seem to pass
 'Neath the deep dark blue of the sky,
 Something much better than words between me
 And Nicholas Nye.

But dusk would come in the apple boughs,
 The green of the glow-worm shine,
 The birds in nest would crouch to rest,
 And home I'd trudge to mine;
 And there in the moonlight, dark with dew,
 Asking not wherefore nor why,
 Would brood like a ghost, and as still as a post,
 Old Nicholas Nye.

HIE AWAY

Sir Walter Scott

This charming little song, full of joy and vigour, is from *Waverley*.

HIE away, hie away
 Over bank and over brae,
 Where the copsewood is the greenest,
 Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
 Where the lady-fern grows strongest,
 Where the morning dew lies longest,
 Where the black-cock sweetest sips it
 Where the fairy latest trips it:
 Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
 Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green,
 Over bank and over brae,
 Hie away, hie away.

THE SANDS OF DEE

Charles Kingsley

In *Earl Haldan's Daughter* Kingsley shows his power of writing a rushing, joyous ballad; here we see how powerfully he can deal with a tragic incident. His adjectives are very well chosen; all who have watched the tide come up over a great flat stretch of sandbanks will feel the truth of the phrases

"The *cruel, crawling* foam,
The *cruel, hungry* foam."

Note also that he does not actually describe the death of the maiden, but leaves that to our imagination; and the sadness is deepened by the pathetic picture of the corpse among the nets, with the beautiful golden hair floating on the surface of the tide.

"O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands of Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

'Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair,
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam
 The cruel, crawling foam,
 The cruel, hungry foam,
 To her grave beside the sea:
 But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
 Across the sands of Dee.

SOUP OF THE EVENING

Lewis Carroll

This "nonsense poem" is a song sung by the Mock Turtle in *Alice in Wonderland*. It is a parody on *Star of the Evening*, a poem which was once very popular. In the same book you will find other parodies, such as *You are Old, Father William*.

BEAUTIFUL Soup, so rich and green,
 Waiting in a hot tureen!
 Who for such dainties would not stoop?
 Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
 Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
 Beau—ootiful Soo—oop!
 Beau—ootiful Soo—oop!
 Soo—oop of the e—e—evening,
 Beautiful, beautiful Soup!

Beautiful Soup! Who cares for fish,
 Game, or any other dish?
 Who would not give all else for two
 Pennyworth only of beautiful Soup?
 Pennyworth only of beautiful Soup?
 Beau—ootiful Soo—oop!
 Beau—ootiful Soo—oop!
 Soo—oop of the e—e—evening,
 Beautiful, beauti—FUL SOUP!

✓ THE CHILDREN'S SPRING SONG

Eva Dobell

Many poets have written about the Spring. Very often they speak of it as the season when plants and trees begin to grow, and nature wakes from the cold short days of winter to the beautiful warmth of Summer. Eva Dobell, in the charming poem that follows, pictures Spring in this way, but she also thinks of it as the time that children love and understand the best. Why do you think she does this? Compare this poem with any other Spring Songs you have read.

COME with us, and we will lead you
 Where the kingcup-lamps are gleaming.
 Come with us, and we will speed you
 To the windflowers' silver-dreaming.
 We know where the blackbird nested
 (We have heard her foolish chiding).
 We have seen King-wren, gold-crested,
 In his moss-built palace hiding.
 Come with us, for we can tell you
 Where the painted orchids grow.
 All Spring's secrets we can spell you,
 For we tracked her, and we know.
 Come with us, our footsteps follow
 Through the folded meadow-lands,
 Powdered thick o'er swell and hollow
 With the dancing cowslip-bands;
 All their fragrant tassels shaking
 Down the sun-warm fields they flock,
 Golden keys hung for our taking
 April's casket to unlock.
 Come with us, and we will show you
 Where the misted bluebells spread;
 Bluebell-seas to overflow you;
 Bluebell-lakes to cool your tread.
 Where the wild bee sips her chalice,
 Swinging o'er that honeyed tide,
 To Spring's azure-moated palace
 Let the children be your guide.

A BIT OF COLOUR

Horace Smith

This is quite a striking poem—not so much because of any sweetness or melody in the words, but because of the unforgettable picture it calls up. First we have the prevailing gray—the gray sky, fields, hills, coats, the lane, the gate; and then the black of the sweep, and the one vivid splash of colour in all the scene, the gay daffodil. One feels that Horace Smith had the eye of an artist.

GRAY was the morn, all things were gray,
 'Twas winter more than spring;
 A bleak east wind swept o'er the land,
 And sobered everything.

Gray was the sky, the fields were gray,
 The hills, the woods, the trees—
 Distance and foreground—all the scene
 Was gray in the gray breeze.

Gray cushions, and a gray skin rug,
 A dark gray wicker trap,
 Gray were the ladies' hats and cloaks,
 And gray my coat and cap.

A narrow, lonely, gray old lane;
 And lo, on a gray gate,
 Just by the side of a gray wood,
 A sooty sweep there sat!

With grimy chin 'twixt grimy hands
 He sat and whistled shrill;
 And in his sooty cap he wore
 A yellow daffodil.

And often when the days are dull,
 I seem to see him still—
 The jaunty air, the sooty face—
 And the yellow daffodil.

THE VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

Lord Byron

This striking poem refers to the story you will find in the Bible. Read the story (Daniel, chap. v.) before reading the poem. Notice the short, impressive lines and the solemn power of the verses. *Chaldea*, *Babel*, refer to the kingdom and the town of Babylon. The Satraps were the governors of the various parts of the empire.

THE King was on his throne,
 The Satraps thronged the hall:
 A thousand bright lamps shone
 O'er that high festival,
 A thousand cups of gold,
 In Judah deemed divine—
 Jehovah's vessels hold
 The godless heathen's wine.

In that same hour and hall
 The fingers of a hand
 Come forth against the wall,
 And wrote as if on sand;
 The fingers of a man,
 A solitary hand
 Along the letters ran,
 And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw and shook,
 And bade no more rejoice;
 All bloodless waxed his look,
 And tremulous his voice.
 "Let men of lore appear,
 The wisest of the earth,
 And read the words of fear,
 Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldea's seers are good,
 But here they have no skill;
 And the unknown letters stood
 Untold and awful still.
 And Babel's men of age
 Are wise and deep in lore;
 But now they were not sage,
 They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
 A stranger and a youth,
 He heard the King's command,
 He saw that writing's truth.
 The lamps around were bright,
 The prophecy in view;
 He read it on that night—
 The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
 His kingdom passed away,
 He, in the balance weighed,
 Is light and worthless clay;
 The shroud his robe of state,
 His canopy the stone;
 The Mede is at his gate!
 The Persian on his throne!"

THE TIGER

William Blake

William Blake was a strange and wonderful man—a great genius whose thoughts were often fixed on Paradise. In the words of the Bible, “he saw visions and dreamed dreams.” Of the things that most people value—wealth, fame, ease—he thought little. Most of his writings and pictures would hardly be understood by children; but he wrote a series of poems, *Songs of Innocence*, which are simple enough for children to understand and love, and yet so full of deep thought that older people find in them much food for thought.

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 And, when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
 In what furnace was thy brain?
 What the anvil? what dread grasp
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
 And watered heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile His work to see?
 Did He who made the lamb, make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

NIGHT

William Blake

In this poem Blake speaks first of the natural objects about him—the birds, the stars, the moon, the flowers. He loved all these. But he saw more. Where others saw only fields, he saw companies of angels moving, and blessing all, flowers and children alike. One of his friends said of him that he was in heaven long before he died.

THE sun descending in the west,
 The evening star does shine;
 The birds are silent in their nest,
 And I must seek for mine.
 The moon, like a flower
 In heaven's high bower,
 With silent delight
 Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove.
 Where flocks have ta'en delight;
 Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
 The feet of angels bright:
 Unseen they pour blessing
 And joy without ceasing,
 On each bud and blossom,
 On each sleeping bosom.

✓ THE JUMBLIES

Edward Lear

Edward Lear wrote really good nonsense verse for children. Such nonsense verses are not easy to write, but if cleverly done they are very amusing indeed. Lear was clever not only at picturing ridiculous situations, but at inventing new words. There are some here—e.g. the *Jumblies*, the *Chankly Bore*. What else in the poem is ridiculous, apart from the fact that the story as a whole is nonsense?

THEY went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
 In a Sieve they went to sea:
 In spite of all their friends could say,
 On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
 In a Sieve they went to sea!
 And when the Sieve turned round and round,
 And everyone cried, "You'll all be drowned!"
 They called aloud, "Our Sieve ain't big,
 But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
 In a Sieve we'll go to sea!"
 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,
 To a land all covered with trees,
 And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
 And a pound of Rice and a Cranberry Tart,
 And a hive of silvery Bees.
 And they bought a Pig, and some green Jackdaws,
 And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
 And forty bottles of Ring-Bo-Ree,
 And no end of Stilton Cheese.

Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

And in twenty years they all came back,
 In twenty years or more,
 And everyone said, "How tall they've grown!
 For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible
 Zone,

And the hills of the Chankly Bore";
 And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
 Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;

And everyone said, "If we only live,
 We too will go to sea in a Sieve,—
 To the hills of the Chankly Bore!"

Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

LAZY-BONES, LAZY-BONES

Charles Lamb

There are several "nonsense verses" in this book. The lines given below are particularly interesting because they were written by Charles Lamb, and are among our earliest examples of this kind of verse.

LAZY-BONES, lazy-bones, wake up and peep!
 The cat's in the cupboard, your mother's asleep.
 There you sit snoring, forgetting her ills;
 Who is to give her her bolus and pills?
 Twenty fine angels must come into town,
 All for to help you to make your new gown:
 Why they came down is to me all a riddle,
 And left Hallelujah broke off in the middle.

✓ THE PIPES OF LUCKNOW

J. G. Whittier

During the terrible Indian Mutiny, Lucknow, a town on the Goomtee (a tributary of the Ganges), was besieged by the rebels. In spite of the loss of their commander, Lawrence, "the best of the brave," the garrison held out nobly, until Havelock fought his way to their relief. Even then a further siege followed, until relief was finally brought by forces under Sir Colin Campbell.

This poem relates an incident that actually occurred. A Scottish girl, a considerable time before others heard any sound of the relieving forces, declared she could hear the bagpipes. As she was ill, it was thought that this was delirium; but what she said proved to be true.

PIPES of the misty moorlands,
 Voice of the glens and hills;
 The droning of the torrents,
 The treble of the rills!
 Not the braes of broom and heather,
 Nor the mountains dark with rain,
 Nor maiden bower, nor border tower,
 Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper
 And plaided mountaineer,—
 To the cottage and the castle
 The Scottish pipes are dear;—
 Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
 O'er mountain, loch, and glade;
 But the sweetest of all music
 The pipes at Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
 Louder yelled, and nearer crept;
 Round and round the jungle-serpent
 Near and nearer circles swept.

“Pray for rescue, wives and mothers,—
 Pray to-day!” the soldier said;
 “To-morrow, death’s between us
 And the wrong and shame we dread.”

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
 Till their hope became despair;
 And the sobs of low bewailing
 Filled the pauses of their prayer.
 Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
 With her ear unto the ground:
 “Dinna ye hear it?—dinna ye hear it?
 The pipes o’ Havelock sound!”

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
 Hushed the wife her little ones;
 Alone they heard the drum-roll
 And the roar of Sepoy guns.
 But to sounds of home and childhood
 The Highland ear was true;—
 As her mother’s cradle-crooning
 The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
 Through the vision of the seer,
 More of feeling than of hearing,
 Of the heart than of the ear,
 She knew the droning pibroch,
 She knew the Campbell’s call:
 “Hark! hear ye no’ MacGregor’s,
 The grandest o’ them all?”

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
 And they caught the sound at last;
 Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
 Rose and fell the piper’s blast!

Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
 Mingled woman's voice and man's;
 "God be praised!—the march of Havelock!
 The piping of the clans!"

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
 Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
 Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,
 Stinging all the air to life.
 But when the far-off dust-cloud
 To plaided legions grew,
 Full tenderly and blithesomely
 The pipes of rescue blew!

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
 Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,
 Breathed the air to Britons dearest,
 The air of Auld Lang Syne.
 O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
 Rose that sweet and homelike strain;
 And the tartan clove the turban,
 As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
 And plaided mountaineer,—
 To the cottage and the castle
 The piper's song is dear.
 Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch
 O'er mountain, glen, and glade;
 But the sweetest of all music
 The Pipes at Lucknow played!

“WHERE LIES THE LAND?”

A. Hugh Clough

These two poems both have the same subject. It will be interesting to compare them and decide which you like the better. Both, at any rate, have one thought in common—the mystery of the sea. Man has to a great extent conquered the land, and even the air—but the sea is tameless. Poets have long felt this; Longfellow speaks of

“The beauty and magic of the ships
And the mystery of the sea.”

Byron says:

“Man marks the earth with ruin; his control
Stops at the shore.”

And Kipling, in *Rolling down to Rio*, says:

“And I’d like to roll to Rio
Some day before I’m old.”

WHERE lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck’s smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or, o’er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far-widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild north-westerns rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

“WHERE LIES THE LAND?”

William Wordsworth

WHERE lies the land to which yon ship must go?
 Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day
 Festively she puts forth in trim array;
 Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
 What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
 She cares for; let her travel where she may
 She finds familiar names, a beaten way
 Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
 Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
 And almost, as it was when ships were rare,
 (From time to time, like pilgrims here and there
 Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
 Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
 Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

THE SECRET OF THE SEA

H. W. Longfellow

In the poem from which these verses are taken, Longfellow tells us how a watcher on the shore saw an old galley, and heard the helmsman chant a wondrous song.

HIS soul was full of longing
 And he cried with impulse strong—
 “Helmsman, for the love of Heaven,
 Teach me, too, that wondrous song.”

“Wouldst thou,” so the helmsman answered,
 “Learn the secrets of the sea?
 Only those who brave its dangers
 Comprehend its mystery.”

THE ARMADA

Lord Macaulay

Lord Macaulay, the great historian, was also an ardent lover of poetry. He did not write many poems, and most of those he wrote are poems of action. As an author of battle-poems there are few equal to him. He formed the plan of writing a long poem on the glorious theme of England's victory over the Spanish Armada, 1588. This is the beginning of the poem and tells us how the news was sent through England. Unfortunately he went no farther. This is a pity, for these splendid long swinging lines make us wish for his account of the battle. It is interesting to follow on a map the routes indicated in the poem.

ATTEND, all ye who list to hear our noble England's
praise;
I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in ancient
days,
When that great fleet invincible against her bore in
vain
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of
Spain.
It was about the lovely close of a warm summer
day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to
Plymouth Bay;
Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet, beyond
Aucrigny's isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many a
mile.
At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's especial
grace;
And the tall *Pinta* till the noon had held her close in
chase.
Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along the
wall;
The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgcumbe's
lofty hall;

Many a light fishing bark put out to pry along the coast,
And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland
many a post.

With his white hair unbonneted, the stout old sheriff
comes;

Behind him march the halberdiers; before him
sound the drums;

His yeomen round the market cross make clear an
ample space;

For there behoves him to set up the standard of Her
Grace.

And haughtily the trumpets peal, and gaily dance
the bells,

As slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon
swells.

Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up his ancient
crown,

And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies
down.

So stalked he when he turned to flight, on that famed
Picard field.

Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's
eagle shield.

So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned
to bay,

And crushed and torn beneath his claws the princely
hunters lay.

Ho, strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight! Ho, scatter
flowers, fair maids!

Ho, gunners, fire a loud salute! Ho, gallants, draw
your blades!

Thou sun, shine on her joyously, ye breezes, waft
her wide,

Our glorious *Semper eadem*, the banner of our pride!
The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's
massy fold;

The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty
scroll of gold.

Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple sea:

Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.

From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay,

That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day.

For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-flame spread:

High on St. Michael's Mount it shone; it shone on Beachy Head.

Far on the deep the Spaniard saw, along each southern shire,

Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.

The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering waves,

The rugged miner poured to war from Mendip's sunless caves;

O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks, the fiery herald flew;

He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers of Beaulieu.

Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out from Bristol town,

And ere the day three hundred horse had met on Clifton down.

The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into the night,

And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of blood-red light;

Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like silence broke,

And with one start, and with one cry, the royal city woke.

At once on all her stately gates arose the answering fires;

At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reeling
 spires;
 From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the
 voice of fear;
 And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a
 louder cheer;
 And from the farthest wards was heard the rush of
 hurrying feet,
 And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed
 down each roaring street.
 And broader still became the blaze, and louder still
 the din,
 As fast from every village round the horse came
 spurring in.
 And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the war-
 like errand went,
 And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant squires
 of Kent.
 Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those
 bright couriers forth;
 High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they
 started for the north;
 And on, and on, without a pause, untired they
 bounded still;
 All night from tower to tower they sprang; they
 sprang from hill to hill,
 Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwin's
 rocky dales,
 Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills
 of Wales,
 Till twelve fair countries saw the blaze on Malvern's
 lonely height,
 Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's
 crest of light,
 Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's
 stately fane,
 And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the
 boundless plain;

Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
 And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale
 of Trent;
 Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's
 embattled pile,
 And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers
 of Carlisle.

MIRIAM'S SONG

Thomas Moore

We read in Exodus, ch. 14, of the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. In the following chapter we are told that Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand, and she and the other women sang. In the poem given here Moore has caught the spirit of triumph and exultation.

SOUND the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea:
 Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!
 Sing! for the pride of the tyrant is broken:
 His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave—
 How vain was their boasting!—the Lord hath but
 spoken,
 And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
 Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea:
 Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!

Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!
 His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword!
 Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
 Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
 For the Lord hath looked out from His pillar of glory
 And all her brave thousands are dashed in the tide.
 Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea:
 Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!

THE WINNERS

Robert Bridges

This poem is marked by the grave, serene dignity that is found in all Robert Bridges' work. That is to say, there is no rush, no haste, no fierce struggle, no violent expression of troubled feelings. The verses are thoughtful, kindly, and with a steady pleasure in simple things. The subject is simple—merely four labourers winnowing corn—yet this suggests to the poet deep thoughts. It is by such operations, after all, that all people are fed; and the truest joy is to be found in honourable work, with no desire to grow rich at another's expense.

BETWIXT two billows of the downs
 The little hamlet lies,
 And nothing sees but the bald crowns
 Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent
 And grey slopes of the wold,
 The red roofs nestle, overspent
 With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the midday sun
 Basking, what time of year
 The thrush his singing has begun,
 Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
 His faggots on the stack:
 Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched
 Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne
 A steady muffled din,
 By which we knew that threshèd corn
 Was winnowing, and went in.

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And on the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed
The hopper lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught;
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not gat us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity:

But here we found ourselves again
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little gain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

THE BURYIN'

Reginald Arkell

In this poem we have the thoughts—or rather the prayer—of an old country labourer who in July knows that he cannot live long. At first one may even smile on reading it. It seems so strange and possibly amusing that a dying man should be troubled because August is an awkward time to die, since a funeral hinders people who are busy. But a little thought shows that there is a great unselfishness in the old man's prayer. He has worked hard and trusted God. He is not in the least afraid of death; but he knows by experience how necessary it is that the harvest shall be got in quickly, and how little able to miss even half a day's work and wages the labourers are. When we realize that, we see that there is heroism and dignity in the strange prayer expressed in such simple, direct country speech.

THE mists be on the river bed,
 The roses all be gone;
 And here be I, about to die,
 Wi' harvest coming on.
 Dear Lord, I've trapsed some weary miles,
 I'll be main glad to rest awhile.

The folk'll soon be in the fields,
 A-getting in the grain.
 For most of those, the time I've chose
 Be awkerd in the main.
 Though not so bad, 'tis sure, for they
 As be a-working by the day.

September be a better month
 For all the carter men;
 And when I die don't signify
 So let I bide till then.
 The waggons'll be standing by,
 And there'll be time to bury I.

THE FOUNTAIN

J. R. Lowell

J. R. Lowell was an American poet who delighted in Nature.

In the poem given here, we should notice how the short, snappy lines, that hardly ever run on into the next, suggests the fountain. The words seem to gush forth in bursts, just as the water does; and one naturally reads them in a rapid, joyous way that again is just like the leap and fall of the fountain.

INTO the sunshine,
Full of the light,
Leaping and flashing
From morn till night!

Into the moonlight,
Whiter than snow,
Waving so flower-like
When the winds blow!

Into the starlight,
Rushing in spray,
Happy at midnight,
Happy by day!

Ever in motion,
Blithesome and cheery,
Still climbing heavenward,
Never weary;

Glad of all weathers,
Still seeming best,
Upward or downward,
Motion thy rest;

Full of a nature
 Nothing can tame,
 Changed every moment,
 Ever the same;
 Ceaseless aspiring,
 Ceaseless content,
 Darkness or sunshine
 Thy element;
 Glorious fountain,
 Let my heart be
 Fresh, changeful, constant,
 Upward, like thee!

SONG OF THE WESTERN MEN

R. S. Hawker

In 1688 seven of the English Bishops who refused to obey an order of the King, James II, which they believed to be unlawful, were imprisoned in the Tower of London. One of these, Bishop Trelawny, was a Cornishman. The people of Cornwall were angry and threatened to march in force to London and set him free. This poem (which is modern) sets out the feelings of the Cornish folk. "Michael's Hold" was a castle in a very strong position on St Michael's Mount, an island in a bay off the south coast of Cornwall. The poem is remarkable for its vigour.

A GOOD sword and a trusty hand!
 A merry heart and true!
 King James's men shall understand
 What Cornish lads can do.

And have they fixed the where and when?
 And shall Trelawny die?
 Then twenty thousand Cornish men
 Will know the reason why!

Out spake their captain brave and bold,
 A merry wight was he;
 "If London Tower were Michael's Hold,
 We'll set Trelawny free!

"We'll cross the Tamar, land to land,
 The Severn is no stay,
 With one and all, and hand in hand,
 And who shall bid us nay?

"And when we come to London Wall,
 A pleasant sight to view,
 Come forth! come forth, ye cowards all,
 Here's men as good as you!

"Trelawny he's in keep and hold,
 Trelawny he may die;
 But twenty thousand Cornish bold,
 Will know the reason why!"

THE MOON IS UP

Alfred Noyes

These fine verses are from *Drake*. In them we see the spirit of the adventurer, who has grown to loathe the idle and the false in life, and longs for wind and the open sea with whatever fortune they may bring.

THE moon is up; the stars are bright:
 The wind is fresh and free!
 We're out to seek for gold to-night
 Across the silver sea!
 The world was growing grey and cold:
 Break out the sails again!
 We're out to seek a Realm of Gold
 Beyond the Spanish Main.

We're sick of all the cringing knees,
 The courtly smiles and lies.
 God, let Thy singing Channel breeze
 Lighten our hearts and eyes!
 Let love no more be bought or sold
 For earthly loss or gain.
 We're out to seek an Age of Gold
 Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,
 Beyond all mortal dreams,
 Beyond the light of night and day
 Our Eldorado gleams,
 Revealing—as the skies unfold—
 A star without a stain,
 The glory of the Gates of Gold
 Beyond the Spanish Main.

BLOW, BUGLE; ANSWER, ECHOES

Lord Tennyson

This splendid song is taken from a long poem called *The Princess*. Tennyson was one of the great masters of the magic of words; and here he gives us a wonderful example of word-painting, first of the scene, and then of the effects of the bugle-notes. Notice in the first four lines the charm produced by the skilful use of the same letter to begin important words. This we call *alliteration*. Then observe how the words he uses suggest the varied sounds of the notes—first pealing loudly among the ancient buildings, then echoed back faintly by the hills, and finally dying away in the distance.

THE splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river:
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD

Lord Tennyson

This is another song from *The Princess*, but of a very different kind. The tragic tale is told in the very simplest words. This power of obtaining great effects from simple words is characteristic of Tennyson. Why was it that the old, old nurse knew the right method of bringing the lady to tears? And why was it that the lady suddenly realized she must live, and not die, as she had wished to do when she saw the body of her dead husband?

HOME they brought her warrior dead:
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
 All the maidens, watching, said,
 "She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Called him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set her child upon her knee—
 Like summer tempest came her tears—
 "Sweet my child, I live for thee."

"O LADY, THY LOVER IS DEAD"

George Macdonald

This poem is a striking contrast with Tennyson's *Home They brought her Warrior Dead*. In both, the woman the dead man had loved is stricken with grief. In the first, the wife is so overcome that she is dazed, prostrate, and saved from madness only by her little child. In this poem the lady is of a firmer, nobler, prouder nature. She mourns bitterly for her lover, but it is a silent, tearless grief, and she rejoices, even in her grief, for the courage and gallantry of the lover whom she will see no more.

"O LADY, thy lover is dead," they cried;
 "He is dead, but hath slain the foe;
 He hath left his name to be magnified
 In a song of wonder and woe."

“Alas! I am well repaid,” said she,
 “With a pain that stings like joy;
 For I feared, from his tenderness to me,
 That he was but a feeble boy.

“Now I shall hold my head on high.
 The queen among my kind.
 If ye hear a sound, ’tis only a sigh
 For a glory left behind.”

✓ A TRAGIC STORY

W. M. Thackeray

This is an amusing example of nonsense verse, which is made more amusing by the fact that the person so troubled was a “sage”—that is, a wise man. Why is it called a *tragic* story? You will notice that all the lines, except the last in each verse, have the same rhyme. This is not usual in poems, but helps to give them a sort of rapid trotting effect. This effect is heightened by the use of so many words of only one syllable.

W. M. Thackeray did not write much verse, but another poem of his, *Little Billee*, will amuse you.

THERE lived a sage in days of yore,
 And he a handsome pigtail wore;
 And wondered much and sorrowed more
 Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon this curious case,
 And swore he’d change the pigtail’s place,
 And have it hanging at his face,
 Not dangling there behind him.

Says he, “The mystery I’ve found—
 I’ll turn me round”—he turned him round;
 And round and round, and round and round,
 But still it hung behind him.

Then round and round, and out and in,
 All day the puzzled sage did spin;
 In vain—it mattered not a pin,—
 The pigtail hung behind him.

And though his efforts never slack,
 And though he twist, and twirl, and tack,
 Alas! still faithful to his back,
 The pigtail hangs behind him.

A WARNING

John Gay

John Gay lived two hundred years ago. Some of his poems are rather amusing. This one, which at first sight appears to be serious, becomes more amusing when read over several times.

THREE children sliding on the ice
 Upon a summer's day,
 It so fell out they all fell in;
 The rest they ran away.

Now, had these children been at home,
 Or sliding on dry ground,
 Ten thousand pounds to one penny
 They had not all been drowned.

You parents all that children have,
 And you that have got none,
 If you would have them safe abroad,
 Pray keep them safe at home.

THE THREE FISHERS

Charles Kingsley

This is the most pathetic of all Kingsley's poems. It should be remembered that for some years he was clergyman in a fishing village in Cornwall, and doubtless the poem was suggested by some such scene as he describes. A story is told that illustrates his own feeling. In later life he happened to be at a London concert when a great singer sang *The Three Fishers*. Before the song was over, Kingsley was seen to rise and make his way from the room, with his hands clasped before his face to hide his tears.

THREE fishers went sailing away to the West,
 Away to the West as the sun went down;
 Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
 And the children stood watching them out of the
 town;
 For men must work, and women must weep,
 And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
 Though the harbour-bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
 And trimmed their lamps as the sun went down,
 And they looked at the squall, and they looked at the
 shower,
 And the night-rack came rolling up, ragged and
 brown;
 But men must work, and women must weep,
 Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
 And the harbour-bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands,
 In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
 And the women are weeping and wringing their hands,
 For those who will never come home to the town;
 For men must work, and women must weep,
 And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep,
 And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

THE PRIEST AND THE MULBERRY-TREE

T. L. Peacock

This amusing story has its moral in the last line. Have you ever read one of the tales in the *Arabian Nights* that has the same moral? Do you know any other stories with the same thought?

In this poem, notice that the metre (or the way the accents fall) suggests the trotting of a horse.

DID you hear of the curate who mounted his mare,
And merrily trotted along to the fair?
Of creature more tractable none ever heard,
In the height of her speed she would stop at a word;
But again with a word, when the curate said, Hey,
She put forth her mettle and gallop'd away.

As near to the gates of the city he rode,
While the sun of September all brilliantly glow'd,
The good priest discover'd, with eyes of desire,
A mulberry-tree in a hedge of wild briar;
On boughs long and lofty, in many a green shoot,
Hung large, black, and glossy, the beautiful fruit;

The curate was hungry and thirsty to boot;
He shrunk from the thorns, though he long'd for the
fruit.

With a word he arrested his courser's keen speed,
And he stood up erect on the back of his steed;
On the saddle he stood while the creature stood still,
And he gather'd the fruit till he took his good fill.

"Sure never," he thought, "was a creature so rare,
So docile, so true, as my excellent mare;
Lo, here now I stand," and he gazed all around,
"As safe and as steady as if on the ground;
Yet how had it been, if some traveller this way,
Had, dreaming no mischief, but chanced to cry, Hey?"

He stood with his head in the mulberry-tree,
 And he spoke out aloud in his fond reverie;
 At the sound of the word the good mare made a push,
 And down went the priest in the wild-briar bush.
 He remember'd too late, on his thorny green bed,
 Much that well may be thought cannot wisely be said.

STUPIDITY STREET

Ralph Hodgson

This short but very striking poem is by a writer who has an intense love and pity for birds and animals. It reminds us sharply how foolish, as well as cruel, it is to kill the birds that destroy so many insects. And when these are song-birds, such as larks, the cruelty and foolishness seems even greater. Why is the poem called *Stupidity Street*?

I SAW with open eyes
 Singing birds sweet
 Sold in the shops
 For the people to eat,
 Sold in the shops of
 Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
 The worm in the wheat,
 And in the shops nothing
 For people to eat;
 Nothing for sale in
 Stupidity Street.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

H. W. Longfellow

Until 1861 there were many slaves in the United States of America. Many of these were well-treated, but others were not; and there were many people who wished to see the dreadful system ended. Among these was the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Mrs. Beecher Stowe) and a group of poets—Whittier, Lowell, and Longfellow. These by their writings did much to stir up people against slavery; and finally—but not until a great war had been fought—the slaves were set free.

In this poem Longfellow pictures a worn-out slave who had been a chieftain in his own land, before the slave-dealers had seized him.

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,
 His sickle in his hand;
 His breast was bare, his matted hair
 Was buried in the sand.
 Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
 He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
 The lordly Niger flowed;
 Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
 Once more a king he strode;
 And heard the tinkling caravans
 Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
 Among her children stand;
 They clasped his neck; they kissed his cheeks,
 They held him by the hand!—
 A tear burst from the sleeper's lids,
 And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyaena scream;
And the river-horse as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For death had illumined the Land of Sleep
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

MY LAND

T. O. Davis

This poem well expresses the deep love for his native land that is felt by a true patriot. This particular poem was written with reference to Ireland—the writer was an Irishman. But what the writer says of his own land, Englishmen, Welshmen and Scotsmen may well say of theirs. We may recall the lines of Scott:

“Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said:
‘This is my own, my native land’?”

SHE is a rich and rare land;
O she’s a fresh and fair land;
She is a dear and rare land—
This native land of mine.

No men than hers are braver—
Her women’s hearts ne’er waver;
I’d freely die to save her,
And think my lot divine.

She’s not a dull or cold land;
No! she’s a warm and bold land;
O she’s a true and old land—
This native land of mine.

Could beauty ever guard her,
And virtue still reward her,
No foe would cross her border—
No friend within it pine.

O she’s a fresh and fair land,
O she’s a true and rare land!
Yes, she’s a rare and fair land—
This native land of mine.

THE SONG OF THE WOODEN- LEGGED FIDDLER

Alfred Noyes

Notice the vigour of this poem, and the light-hearted spirit that breathes through it. This is characteristic of those writers who deal with the sea and sailors. You will find it in Newbolt and Masefield, in Dibdin and Marryatt.

I LIVED in a cottage adown in the West
 When I was a boy, a boy;
 But I knew no peace and I took no rest
 Though the roses nigh smothered my snug little nest;
 For the smell of the sea
 Was much rarer to me,
 And the life of a sailor was all my joy.

Chorus—*The life of a sailor was all my joy!*

My mother she wept, and she begged me to stay
 Anchored for life to her apron-string,
 And soon she would want me to help wi' the hay;
 So I bided my time, then I flitted away
 On a night of delight in the following spring,
 With a pair of stout shoon
 And a seafaring tune
 And a bundle and stick in the light of the moon,
 Down the long road
 To Portsmouth I strode,
 To fight like a sailor for country and king.

Chorus—*To fight like a sailor for country and king.*

And now that my feet are turned homeward again
 My heart is still crying, Ahoy! Ahoy!
 And my thoughts are still out on the Spanish Main
 A-chasing the frigates of France and Spain,
 For at heart an old sailor is always a boy;

And his nose will itch
 For the powder and pitch
 Till the days when he can't tell t'other from which,
 Nor a grin o' the guns from a glint o' the sea,
 Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.
 Chorus—*Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.*

Ay! Now that I'm old I'm as bold as the best,
 And the life of a sailor is all my joy;
 Though I've swapped my leg
 For a wooden peg
 And my head is as bald as a new-laid egg,
 The smell of the sea
 Is like victuals to me,
 And I think in the grave I'll be crying, Ahoy!
 For, though my old carcass is ready to rest,
 At heart an old sailor is always a boy.
 Chorus—*At heart an old sailor is always a boy.*

LITTLE TROTTY WAGTAIL

John Clare

John Clare was a poet who loved all country scenes and creatures. Sad to say, the poet passed many years in an asylum. Yet even there he wrote poems. In this little poem, notice how the quick, jerky way in which the words run suggests the movements of the wagtail.

LITTLE trotty wagtail, he went in the rain,
 And twittering, tottering sideways he ne'er got straight
 again.
 He stooped to get a worm, and looked up to get a fly,
 And then he flew away ere his feathers they were dry.

Little trotty wagtail, he waddled in the mud,
 And left his little foot-marks, trample where he would.
 He waddled in the water-pudge, and waggle went his
 tail,
 And chirrupt up his wings to dry upon the garden rail.

Little trotty wagtail, you nimble all about,
 And in the dimpling water-pudge you waddle in and
 out;
 Your home is nigh at hand and in the warm pig-stye,
 So little Master Wagtail, I'll bid you a good-bye.

THE SHIP

J. C. Squire

We have already spoken of the magic and mystery of the sea and the ships that pass across it. Here is the same spirit again, but this time the ship is returning, not departing. What was its story, we wonder? Can we not make up quite a number that would be suitable? At any rate, there is the air of mystery that seems to belong to each ship gliding towards its port, and which was much greater before wireless telegraphy enabled those on shore and at sea to tell each other what was happening.

T HERE was no song nor shout of joy
 Nor beam of moon or sun,
 When she came back from the voyage
 Long ago begun;
 But twilight on the waters
 Was quiet and gray,
 And she glided steady, steady and pensive,
 Over the open bay.

Her sails were brown and ragged,
 And her crew hollow-eyed,
 But their silent lips spoke content
 And their shoulders pride;
 Though she had no captives on her deck,
 And in her hold
 There were no heaps of corn or timber
 Or silks or gold.

THE POOLS-OF-PEACE

Joan Campbell

Here we have a beautiful little poem on the joy of sleep and sweet dreams. Many other poems picture sleep as a land in which peace is found. This poem carries the idea further. There are the pools where Peace dwells, which we may reach by winding paths, and where the winds scatter dust that brings sweet dreams.

THE little Pools-of-Peace lie far
 From dusty ways of noon,
 Along the winding paths of sleep
 To where the hills of twilight keep
 The gardens of the Moon.

When night comes softly down the sky
 And lights each waiting star,
 The minstrels of the Moon play low
 For dancing feet of winds that go
 To those still pools afar.

The little Winds-of-Dream go swift
 And scatter with light hands
 The Dust-of-Dreams to seal the sight
 Of those who weary of the light,
 And seek for Elfin lands.

O follow then the little winds
 Along those shadowy ways,
 And find the Pools-of-Peace that lie
 So fair beneath the dreaming sky,
 So far from dusty days.

COWSLIPS AND LARKS

W. H. Davies

W. H. Davies is a poet who has led an adventurous, wandering life. He has always loved Nature passionately; in one of his poems he says what a precious, wonderful day it was to him when he saw a rainbow and heard a cuckoo singing. And here, although farmers may despise such a field as worthless, the poet sees the cowslips that grow there, and hears the larks singing above it, and to him the field becomes a part of Paradise.

I HEAR it said yon land is poor,
 In spite of those rich cowslips there—
 And all the singing larks it shoots
 To heaven from the cowslips' roots.
 But I with eyes that beauty find,
 And music ever in my mind,
 Feed my thoughts well upon that grass
 Which starves the horse, the ox, and ass.

So here I stand, two miles to come
 To Shapwick and my ten-days-home,
 Taking my summer's joy, although
 The distant clouds are dark and low,
 And comes a storm that, fierce and strong,
 Has brought the Mendip hills along:
 Those hills that when the light is there
 Are many a sunny mile from here.

CLEAN CLARA

W. B. Rands

This is an extremely amusing poem, which becomes more amusing each time we read it. The list of things that Clara cleaned is wonderful, and one admires the cleverness of the poet who compiled it. Even the spring of a secret lock was not to escape. You should note specially the humorous touch with which he ends the list of what Clara cleaned—"she cleaned herself."

WHAT! not know our Clean Clara?
 Why, the hot folks in Sahara,
 And the cold Esquimaux,
 Our little Clara know!
 Clean Clara, the poet sings,
 Cleaned a hundred thousand things!

She cleaned the keys of the harpsichord,
 She cleaned the hilt of the family sword,
 She cleaned my lady, she cleaned my lord;
 All the pictures in their frames,
 Knights with daggers, and stomachered dames—
 Cecils, Godfreys, Montforts, Græmes,
 Winifreds—all those nice old names!

She cleaned the works of the eight-day clock,
 She cleaned the spring of a secret lock;
 She cleaned the mirror, she cleaned the cupboard;
 All the books she India-rubbed!

She cleaned the Dutch-tiles in the place,
 She cleaned some very old-fashioned lace;
 The Countess of Miniver came to her,
 "Pray, my dear, will you clean my fur?"
 All her cleanings are admirable;
 To count your teeth you will be able,
 If you look in the walnut-table!

She cleaned the tent-stitch and the sampler;
 She cleaned the tapestry, which was ampler;
 She cleaned the drops of the chandeliers,
 Madam in mittens was moved to tears!

She cleaned the cage of the cockatoo,
 The oldest bird that ever grew;
 I should say a thousand years would do—
 I'm sure he looked it, but nobody knew;
 She cleaned the china, she cleaned the delf;
 She cleaned the baby, she cleaned herself!

To-morrow morning she means to try
 To clean the cobwebs from the sky;
 Some people say the girl will rue it,
 But my belief is she will do it.
 So I've made up my mind to be there to see,
 There's a beautiful place in the walnut-tree,
 The bough is as firm as the solid rock;
 She brings out her broom at six o'clock.

THE PIPER

Patrick Chalmers

Poets often write of the earth, the woods, the stars, the streams, and other parts of nature as though they lived and could feel. In the Bible, for instance, we read of the hills clapping their hands, and the valleys shouting for joy. The idea is very beautiful and gives a charm to this poem. Who was the piper? The poet does not say, but perhaps you can find an answer. Notice how the poet loves colour.

LAST night in the wood an old piper went by,
 And he twittered a tune on his reeds,
 And the planets, to hear him, stood still in the sky,
 And the wood-flowers awoke on the meads.

The moon floated up, like a bubble of gold,
 And the wood was all silver and jade;
 She'd heard of the piper, by field and by fold,
 Since she was a slip of a maid:

With his thin, little piping he went as he came,
 With a thin, little echo behind;
 But the tune of the piper had never a name;
 'Twas the Earth and the Stars and the Wind.

THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN

Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling, one of the greatest of modern poets, has an intense love for England, as this poem shows. His poetry is not always musical, but there is always a wonderful power and strength in it. He delights in effort, in hard work, in taking risks, and in a desperate struggle against odds. This poem is a long metaphor, in which, taking England as a garden, all classes of people and work are described in terms relating to the garden. It is worth while going to some trouble to find out all the meaning of the poem, and you should note specially the last two verses.

OUR England is a garden that is full of stately
 views,
 Of borders, beds, and shrubberies, and lawns and
 avenues,
 With statues on the terraces, and peacocks strutting
 by;
 But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets
 the eye.

For where the old thick laurels grow, along the thin
 red wall,
 You'll find the tool- and potting-sheds which are the
 heart of all,

The cold-frames and the hothouses, the dung-pits
and the tanks,
The rollers, carts, and drain-pipes, with the barrows
and the planks.

And there you'll see the gardeners, the men and
'prentice boys
Told off to do as they are bid and do it without noise;
For, except when seeds are planted and we shout
to scare the birds,
The Glory of the Garden, it abideth not in words.

And some can pot begonias and some can bud a rose,
And some are hardly fit to trust with anything that
grows;
But they can roll and trim the lawns and sift the sand
and loam,
For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all that come.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not
made
By singing—"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the
shade,
While better men than we go out and start their
working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken
dinner-knives.

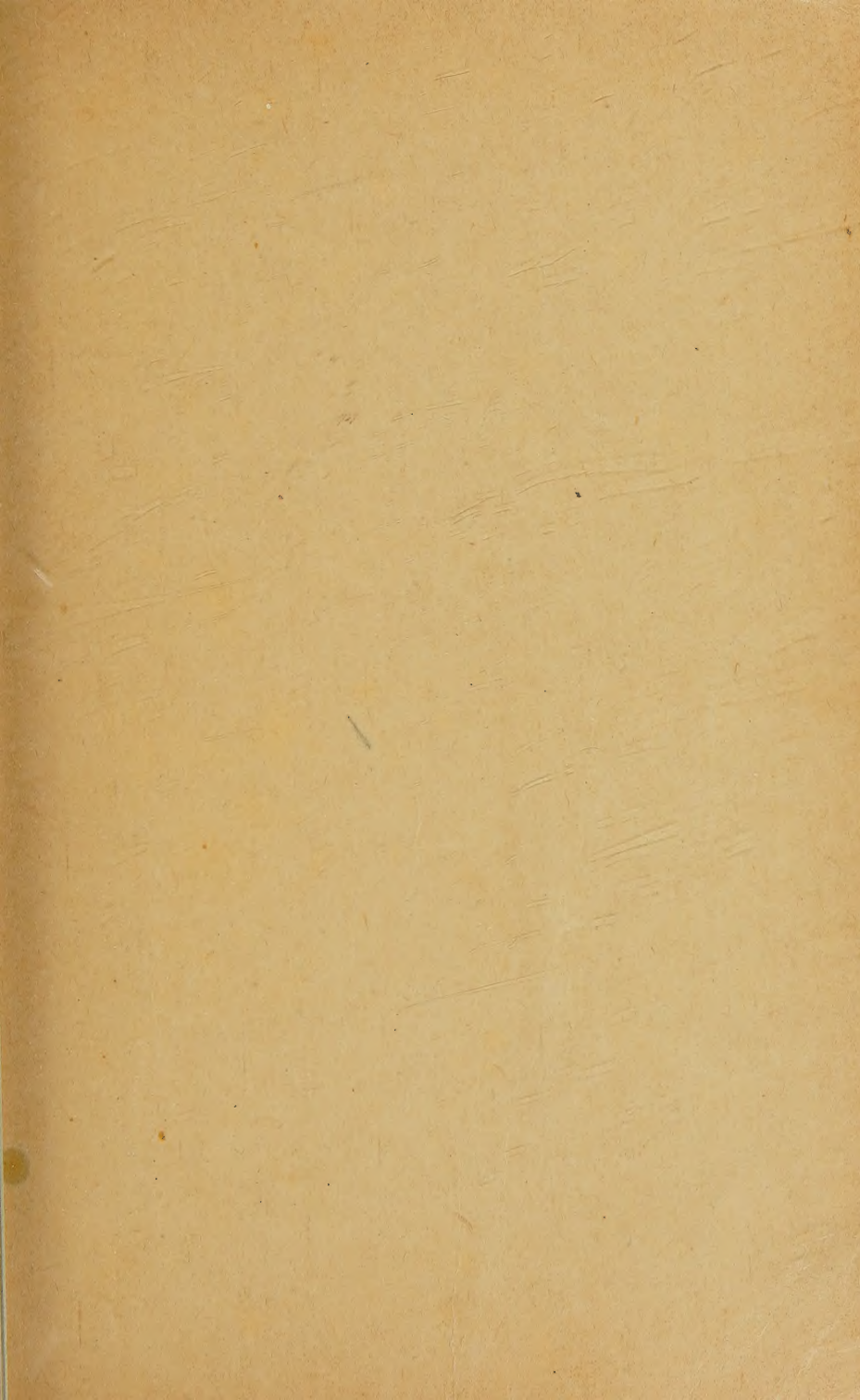
There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head
so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a
heart so sick,
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be
done,
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

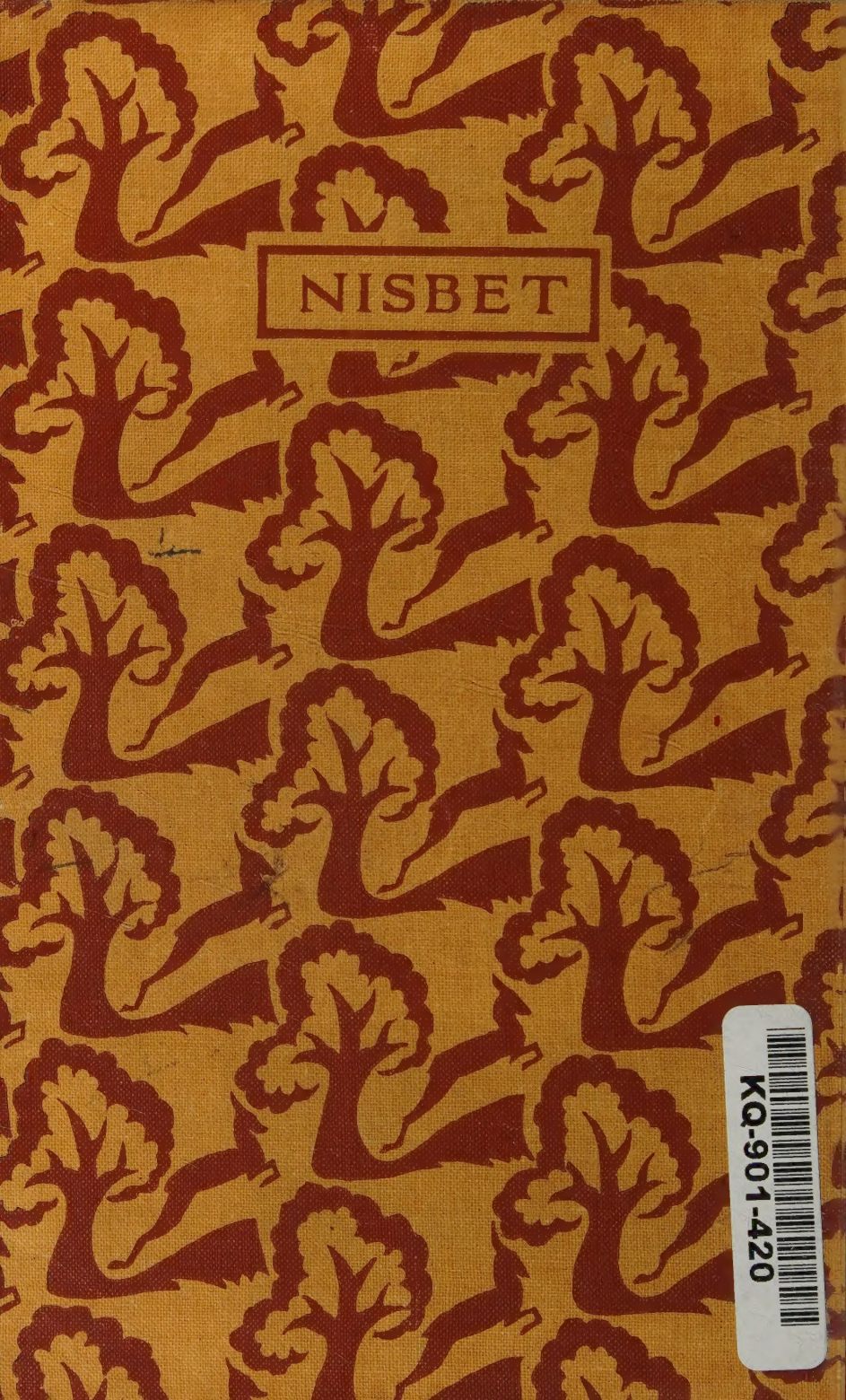
Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till
 further orders,
 If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on
 borders:
 And when your back stops aching and your hands
 begin to harden
 You will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the
 Garden.

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him
 sees
 That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his
 knees,
 So when your work is finished, you can wash your
 hands and pray
 For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass
 away!
 AND THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN IT SHALL NEVER PASS
 AWAY!

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| SIR W. WATSON: | <i>April; The Fisher; The Key Board</i> |
| W. WORDSWORTH: | <i>To the Cuckoo; Reverie of Poor Susan;
The Power of Music; The Celandine</i> |
| R. HERRICK: | <i>Meadows; Primroses and Dew;
Night Piece to Julia</i> |
| PERCY ILOTT: | <i>The Desirable Island; The Lost Egg;
The Garden; The Scarecrow</i> |
| BLISS CARMAN: | <i>The Joys of the Road; Vagabond's Song</i> |
| C. KINGSLEY: | <i>Youth and Age</i> |
| R. BROWNING: | <i>How They Brought the Good News;
Incident of the French Camp;
Hervé Riel</i> |
| THOMAS MOORE: | <i>The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls
Canadian Boat Song</i> |
| LORD TENNYSON: | <i>The Lord of Burleigh; The Sailor Boy</i> |
| WALTER DE LA MARE: | <i>Down-adown-Derry; The Funeral;
The Dwarf; The Listeners</i> |
| J. G. WHITTIER: | <i>Conductor Bradley; Songs of Labour</i> |
| R. SOUTHEY: | <i>Bishop Hatto; The Well of St. Keyne;
Lodore; The Battle of Blenheim</i> |
| H. W. LONGFELLOW: | <i>St. Filomena; The Norman Baron</i> |
| W. COWPER: | <i>Nose v. Eyes; An Epitaph</i> |
| JOHN CLARE: | <i>Summer Evening; The Thrush's Nest;
Autumn; The First Sight of Spring</i> |
| ALFRED NOYES: | <i>Sherwood; Old Gray Squirrel</i> |
| LORD BYRON: | <i>The Destruction of Sennacherib's Host</i> |
| SIR H. NEWBOLT: | <i>Hawke; Death of Blake; Admirals All</i> |
| C. G. ROSSETTI: | <i>A Birthday; Goblin Market;
If Stars Dropped Out of Heaven</i> |
| SIR W. SCOTT: | <i>Rosabelle; Pibroch of Donuil Dhu;
County Guy; Alice Brand</i> |
| W. B. RANDS: | <i>Juan de Pareja; The First of June</i> |
| LORD MACAULAY: | <i>The Battle of Naseby; Ivry;
The Last Buccaneer; Horatius</i> |





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